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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Skovde Project to be implemented in day care centers in Skovde, Sweden. The purpose of this project is to identify the current quality of care in day care centers and to examine the impact of upcoming decentralized organization of the centers and a more flexible child care levy system on the effectiveness of resource use and the quality of care. The organizational changes include an increase in the size of children's groups in the centers, a decrease in staff density, and an increase in the number of centers managed by each day care manager. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) will be used to measure day care quality on a pre-post basis. Parental and staff ratings of quality will also be obtained through questionnaires. Pretest measures were obtained in the spring prior to the fall introduction of the organizational changes. The Data Envelopment Analysis method will be used to conduct a cost analysis to identify efficiency of resource use. Because the instruments used in this study are identical to those of similar day care studies in Goteborg and Lerum, Sweden, it will be possible to obtain a broader picture of the current state of child care in Sweden. (KDFB)

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The E.C.E.R.S. AS A BASE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY IN DAY CARE CENTERS IN SWEDEN

The Skövde project
- Application of quality ratings in preschools in community developmental work

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The purpose with Skövde project is to identify: If, What and How local organisational changes, based upon political decisions, possibly effects the quality provision in day- care activities. In this session the organisational changes, the projects purpose, the projects design, its methods and instruments are presented. An explaintion is also given why these methods, instruments are selected and finally the expections of the projects results are presented. (OH 1: The pupose of the project)

Political decisions in the community

The organisational changes are based up on political decisions, the reorganisation will be introduced during the autum this year, it is a process and it will take som time to introduce the changes. Diffrent conditions can appear during the process and we do not know what will happend, things that can effect the daycare- activity and quality, it means, that the project is an evaluation project. We assume that the picture of the reorganisation will be more clear after a year from now.

The aime with the Organisational changes at Skövde is to involve an effectivisation of the child day-care provision in the council district, in the sense that the size of childrens groups will be increased and staff density will be reduced further.

The management support in the district will be reduced through a broadening of the resposibility fields of day-care management and an increase in the number of "units" (centers) managed per manager. The organisation will be more flat.

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New Levies

The administration department have got the mission to constuct a new "more flexible levies system" and time - frames for child-care provision in the community, the new levies system is supposed to led to enchanced resource efficiency. The question is: What will these changes mean for the quality of care provision in the district? (OH- picture 2 :The organisational changes)

Pupose

The purpose of the project is to identify what the effects of the decentralised organisation and enhanced resours efficency and the new child-care levies and timeframes are on the quality of care provision

The relations the project intends to focus particulary can be summarised though the following list of questions:

What is the present standard of quality of child day-care in the Skövde district?

What happends to quality in the wake of reorganisation?

Are resources being used more effictively and rationally after reorganisation?

Does the new resourcing procedure allow for adequately balanced resourcing in relation to needs a differentially loaded centers?

Has the introduction of more flexible levies system led to enhanced resource efficiency?

(OH-picture 3: The relations the project intends to focus particulary can be summarised through the following list of questions.)

Design

The actual quality of child- day care provision will be rated by independent judges using ECERS before and after the introduction of organisational changes.
In order to promote the development of diffrent forms of quality enhancement, measurements were made, in the first study during the spring this year, of the existing quality of child day-care provision at a representative centre sample in the Skövde district. This comprised 45 departments with children at the ages 3 to 5, from the total 59 sections.
Parallel to these measurements, parental and staff judgements of quality were also poled. These questionairies have been used earlier in the Göteborg studies by Gunni Kärrby. 544 parents and 165 personnel from 59 sections respoded to the questionairies in Skövde.
(OH- picture 4, DESIGN)

The Parental Perspective for exampel concerns issues about quality and:

-How much information parents obtain about the conditions affecting their child,

- What respects are paid by the staff to parental points of view with regard to day-care activities.

- Contact and information

- Perspective in work and day-care

-values, rules and norms in child- rearing and

- questions concerning how to judge the quality of child day-care provision

The questionaire to the staff, adresses issues concerning for example:

- Budget

- inservice education and training,

- evelopment work,

- personnel policy,

- continuity,

- parental contact,

- work condition,

- values, rules and norms in child- rearing and

- questions concerning how to judge the quality of child day-care provision.

DEA- method

The picture of quality obtained will be complimented by a cost analysis intended to indicate how resources are used. Differences between centers concerning the deployment of resources and the use of pedagogic activities will also be dressed in the project from a point of departure in the question: In what ways do diffrent resoursing efforts effect the pedagogic quality of child day- care provision? In order to a certain fluctuations i productivity and resource efficiency a statistical method, the so called DEA- method (Data Envelopment analysis) is used.
(OH- 5: DEA method)

Results- data analysis

With the help of the results from these various measurements, correlations assassments between quality and resource efficiency will be made. Comparisions between different instrument, comparisions between Day Care Centers.
We assume that the design of the study, gives us the opportunity to identify the effects of changes on the quality of provision, identified differences can possible then be equated with underlying organisational changes. The results obtained, will form the foundations for further discussions, of what kind of support arrangements the council will need to introduce, in order to safegard the quality of its day- care activities. By using the same instruments at both Skövde and Lerum as were developed and used in the Göteborg investigation excellent possibilities for the comparison of results within and between different contexts exist. And we assume that this will give us a good picture of Swedish- Child- Care. (OH picture 6: Results- data analysis)

The purpose of project

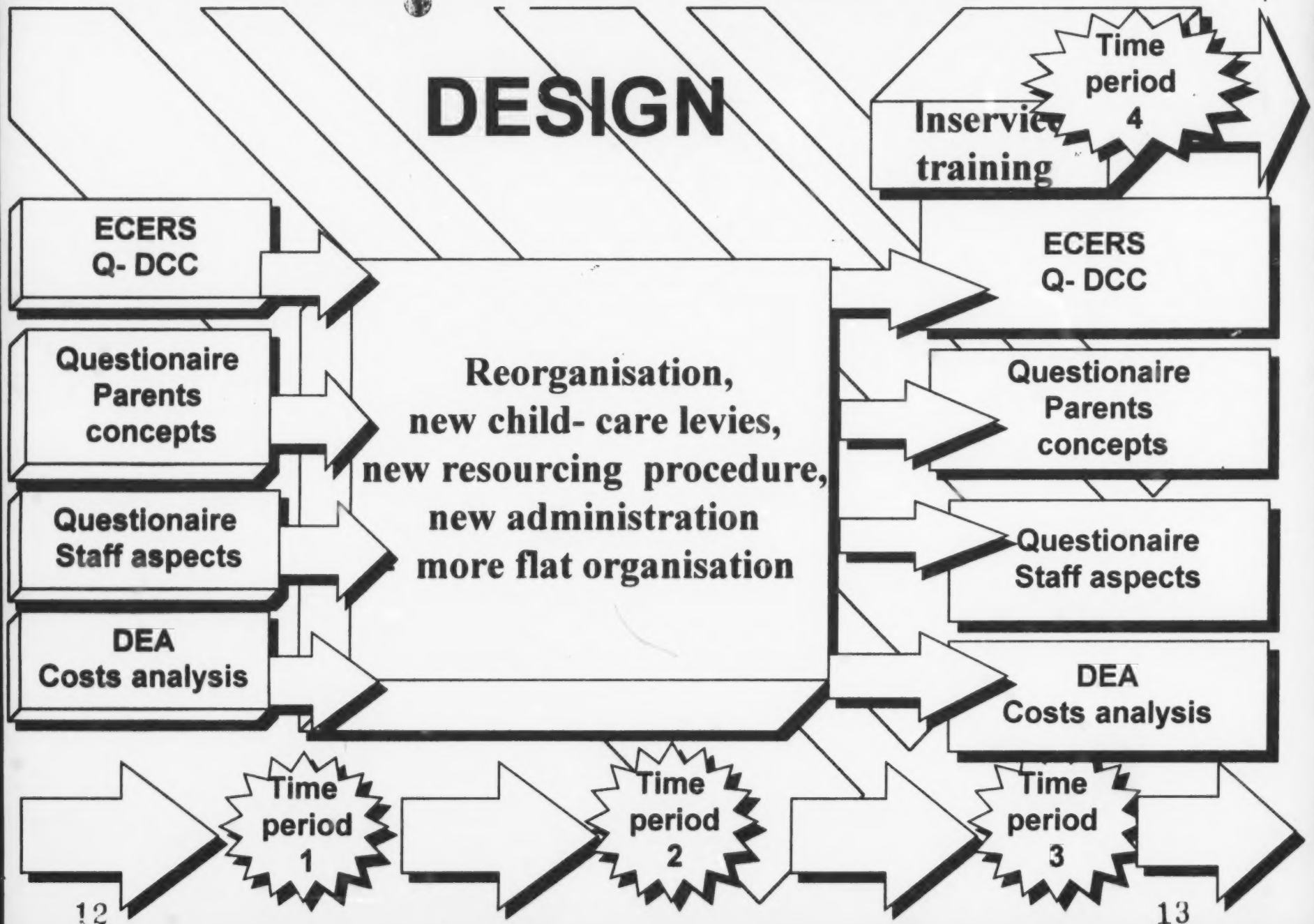
- is to identify what the effects of the decentralised organisation and enhanced resource efficiency and the new child- care levies and time- frames are on the Q of care provision.

The organisational changes

- An effectivisation of the child day-care provision
- The size of the children groups will be increased
- Staff density will be reduced further
- Management support will be reduced
- A broadening of the responsibility fields of day-care management
- An increase in number of "units" managed per manager
  - The organisation will be more flat
- A new "more flexible levies system" and time frames for child-care provision

- ***The relations the project intends to focus particulary can be summarised through the following list of questions:***

- **What is the present standard of Q of child day-care in the Skövde district?**
- **What happends to Q in the wake of reorganisation?**
- **Are resources being used more efficitvely and rationally after reorganisation?**
- **Does the new resourcing procedure allow for adequately balanced resourcing in relation to needs at differentially loaded centers?**
- **Has the introduction of a more flexible levies system led to enhanced resource efficiency?**


DESIGN
ECERS
Q- DCC
Questionaire
Parents
concepts
Questionaire
Staff aspects
DEA
Costs analysis
Reorganisation,
new child- care levies,
new resourcing procedure,
new administration
more flat organisation
Time
period
1
Time
period
2
Time
period
3
Time
period
4
Inservice
training
ECERS
Q- DCC
Questionaire
Parents
concepts
Questionaire
Staff aspects
DEA
Costs analysis

DEA method

Full work.days + space

Reg. child. 1/2+1/1 time

= Resource efficiency

Results- data analysis

- Correlation assassments between Q and resource efficiency will be made
- Correlations between diffrent instruments
- Comparisions between DCC
- Comparisions with Skövde , Göteborg and Lerum

What organisational changes leed to diffrent Q?

And we assume that this
will give us a good picture of Swedish- Child- Care.